



Visitors' Guide to the United States Court House
Indianapolis, Indiana
and the
United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana



Welcome to the Federal District Court and to the beautiful building which has been home to our court for almost one hundred years. This imposing structure, filled with marble and mosaics, statues and friezes, and exquisitely detailed paintings, has provided a fitting backdrop for the many important legal decisions handed down by judges and juries in our district. Joined by our colleagues at the United States General Services Administration, who own and manage the building, we are proud to share a bit of our history and tradition with you and hope that you enjoy your visit.

June, 2004

The Judges of the Court

District Judges

Sarah Evans Barker, Larry J. McKinney, John Daniel Tinder,
David F. Hamilton, Richard L. Young

Magistrate Judges

William G. Hussmann, Jr., V. Sue Shields, Tim A. Baker, William T. Lawrence,
Michael Naville, Jordan P. Lewis, John Paul Godich, Kennard P. Foster

Bankruptcy Judges

Frank J. Otte, Basil H. Lorch, III, Anthony J. Metz, III, James K. Coachys

Welcome to the U.S. Court House

Over its century-long life, the United States Court House in Indianapolis has housed offices of all three branches of the federal government in Indiana. At the beginning, the judicial branch occupied only a small portion of the building, with only one district judge sitting for the whole state. Today, however, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana and associated agencies occupy most of the building. The Court House is a busy place, although its corridors are not bustling as they were during its heyday as the Main Post Office and headquarters for all federal agencies.



Photo: Shawn Spence

Ohio Street facade.



Photo: Shawn Spence

Indianapolis Court House.

The U.S. District Court

The District Court conducts its work in a variety of ways. Cases are tried by a jury or by a judge, but the vast majority of cases are resolved before trial. The court often decides cases and motions based only on the written submissions of the parties. Hearings are held to receive evidence and hear argument on motions and other preliminary matters. Judges also periodically hold conferences in chambers with the parties to manage the progress of cases and to explore the opportunities for settlement by the parties.



Photo: Shawn Spence

Conference in chambers.

The United States Probation Office is an agency of the court. This office provides various services in criminal cases.



Photo: Shawn Spence

Deputy Marshals escorting detainee.

The offices of the United States Marshal are also in the building. The Marshals Service is a branch of the Department of Justice but its duties include providing services to the judiciary. The United States Marshal and his Deputy Marshals in the Court House provide protection to the judges and security during court proceedings. They serve and execute the court's writs and other processes. The Marshals Service is also responsible for transporting and guarding criminal defendants and prisoners to and from court appearances. Some of the Marshal's other duties include apprehending fugitives, transporting federal prisoners between correctional facilities, and conducting joint fugitive apprehension with state and local authorities.

History of the District Court in Indiana

For nearly two centuries, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana has been called upon to resolve the most significant legal, political, and social problems of the day. The federal judicial presence was established in Indiana in a territorial court in 1800. Seventeen years later, President James Monroe appointed the first district judge who, sitting alone, exercised federal jurisdiction throughout the State of Indiana. Indeed, a single federal judge served the entire state until 1928, when President Calvin Coolidge signed into law a statute that divided the state into northern and southern districts. The Southern District continued to be served by only one judge until 1954, when Cale J. Holder joined William E. Steckler on the Indianapolis bench.



Judge William E. Steckler's Courtroom circa 1910.

Photo: Boss Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library



Judge Benjamin Parke

From its earliest days, the court has made its mark on the nation's judicial landscape. In 1818, Judge Benjamin Parke, a political ally of territorial Governor (and later President) William Henry Harrison, upheld the constitutionality of the federal statute permitting the return of fugitive slaves to the states from which they had fled. In 1862, Judge Caleb Blood Smith, who as President Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of the Interior was the first cabinet secretary from Indiana, presided over the "Morgan County War" trials, sparked by a band of Southern Indiana citizens firing on Cavalry troops attempting to arrest Union Army deserters. Judge David McDonald played a preliminary but important role in the development of constitutional law by his Civil War era decision in *Ex parte Milligan*, a case in which the United States Supreme Court ultimately held in 1866 that a military court may not try and sentence a civilian (Huntington lawyer Lambdin P. Milligan) when civilian courts are available. In the mid-1920s, the court presided over a series of Prohibition era prosecutions, including the "Jack Daniels Case," which implicated a revenue collector from Missouri in a criminal scheme that siphoned 30,000 gallons of whiskey from nearly 900 barrels, and replaced the spirits with water.

The Southern District bench, whose members have included former Indiana Supreme Court justices, former members of Indiana's General Assembly and a former member of the United States House of Representatives, was an all-male institution until President Ronald Reagan appointed the first woman judge, Sarah Evans Barker, to the court in 1984. The present day court has addressed such complex and divisive public issues as busing, obscenity, school prayer, police brutality, prison conditions, civil rights, voting rights, legislative influence-peddling, corruption in the state judiciary, ownership of international art antiquities, and the right of a child with AIDS to attend public school, in addition to many highly significant private lawsuits with national and international implications and effects.



The United States Court House at the southeast corner of Market and Pennsylvania Streets, erected 1860, now demolished.

The Southern District Court Today

The name, "United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana," tells much about the institution. It is a court of the United States, created by the federal government, not the state. The District Court is a trial court, the first of three levels of the federal judiciary (the others being the Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court). Its venue consists of the sixty southernmost Indiana counties, extending generally from Howard County on the north, to the state lines on the east and west, down to the Ohio River.

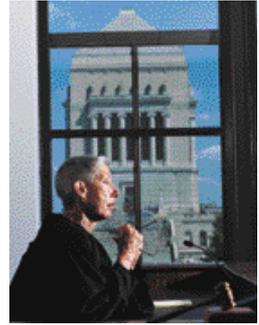


Photo: Shawn Spence

Today, the court consists of five authorized district judges, four magistrate judges, and four bankruptcy judges. A sixth district judge is serving on senior status. District judges are appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and serve for life, in the words of the Constitution, "during good behavior." Magistrate judges are appointed by the District Court to eight-year terms; bankruptcy judges are appointed by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals to fourteen-year terms.



Photo: Shawn Spence

A hearing in progress.

The Southern District has four divisions: Indianapolis, New Albany, Evansville, and Terre Haute. A district judge and a magistrate judge sit full-time in Evansville and one bankruptcy judge sits full-time in New Albany; all other judges sit full-time in Indianapolis. Judges from Indianapolis and Evansville also "ride the circuit" to New Albany and Terre Haute to handle business in those divisions.

Federal courts have jurisdiction to hear two types of cases: federal question cases, which involve disputes governed by the United States Constitution or federal laws and treaties; and diversity of citizenship cases, governed by state law but which involve disputes between citizens of different states. Federal question cases can be either criminal prosecutions or civil suits; diversity cases are all civil suits. In 2002, 3071 civil cases and 365 criminal cases were filed in the Southern District. Generally, only two percent of federal cases actually go to trial; the rest are settled, dismissed, or adjudicated by written rulings by the judge.

The Clerk of the District Court processes the paperwork of the court, handling case

filings and record-keeping. The Bankruptcy Court has a separate clerk's office. The Probation Office supervises criminal defendants before trial and after release, at the conclusion of incarceration, and prepares investigations and reports for the judges to use in making sentencing decisions. Each judge is assisted by an administrative assistant/secretary, a courtroom deputy clerk, and law clerks. Each judge is provided with a courtroom in addition to chambers, where the day-to-day work of the court is conducted.



Photo: Shawn Spence

The Office of the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court.



Photo: Shawn Spence

Judge S. Hugh Dillin congratulates newly naturalized citizens.

The History of the Court House

Because early federal court business in Indiana was infrequent during the first half of the nineteenth century, the first District Court judges conducted their proceedings in the Indiana Supreme Court's Statehouse court room. In 1860, Indiana's first Federal Court House and Post Office was erected at the southeast corner of Market and Pennsylvania Streets in downtown Indianapolis. This four-story stone building (expanded over the years) housed all federal agencies serving Indiana's citizens until it was outgrown in the late nineteenth century and plans were made for the present United States Court House.



Cornerstone laying ceremony, 1903.

Photo: Bess Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library

The current Court House, constructed in 1905, is an excellent example of the Beaux Arts style made popular in the United States by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. John Hall Rankin and Thomas Kellogg, noted Philadelphia architects, secured the design contract, and the Treasury Department accepted the New York-based John Peirce Company's low construction bid

of \$1,300,000 (the final cost, however, reached nearly \$2,000,000). Begun in 1902 and completed in 1905, the new Federal Building was massive. Accommodating 925 federal employees, the U-shaped, Beaux Arts structure occupied an entire block, rose four stories, housed federal courts, executive offices, and the main post office.

Originally half its current size, the building was expanded in 1938, occupying an entire city block to accommodate more office, postal, and court space. The addition was designed by the local architectural firm of McGuire and Shook, extending the original colonnades, adding a fifth floor "penthouse" on the north end, and two portals on the northeast and northwest corners for access by postal vehicles.



Photo: Bess Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library, Neg. 8544

Postal workroom circa 1905.

Inside, each federal function had its own space. The Post Office's sorting and customer service facilities occupied the first floor. The second story housed two monumental court rooms, judges' chambers, the Office of the Clerk of the Court, the United States Marshal's office, the United States Attorney's Office, and court library. The upper stories accommodated various other federal offices, and the fourth floor included dormitories and club rooms for railroad postal workers required to lay over in the city. The basement contained additional postal space and storage rooms.



Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library, Neg. 237052-F

U.S. Postal workers and vehicles along the northside of the building circa 1905. This area was filled in with the 1938 addition.

During the first half of the twentieth century, especially after the Great Depression, new federal programs increased the number of agencies (and employees) occupying the building. By the early 1970s, construction of the Minton-Capehart Federal Building and a new main post office relieved the crowded conditions in the original Court House. The United States General Services Administration, the federal government's landholder, then remodeled vacated offices and restored the splendid architectural details of the original public areas in what is now referred to as the United States Court House.



Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library

United States Court House under construction, February 20, 1904.

The U.S. Court House - A Living Landmark

The United States Court House and Federal Building (formerly known as the United States Court House and Post Office) was one of only 35 federal buildings constructed under the Tarsney Act of 1892. The Treasury Department sought designs for the new Federal Building from private architectural firms through an open design competition allowed under the act. Rankin and Kellogg's design created a limestone-clad, four-story building with grand corner entrances on the south elevation flanked by four classical sculptures representing industry, agriculture, literature and justice. Between these entrances and extending along the east and west elevations ranged rows of giant Ionic columns.

The style is predominantly Beaux Arts Classicism, although the north (rear) elevation was Palladian. This style, also known as Neo-Classical, was commonly used during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for residential, commercial and governmental structures alike, but here probably also provides an allusion to Rome, the origin of our civil law. This style was popularized by the majestic buildings of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The United States Court House and Federal Building inspired Beaux Arts designs for other public buildings in Indianapolis, including City Hall (1910), the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library (1917), and buildings in the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza (dedicated in 1927).

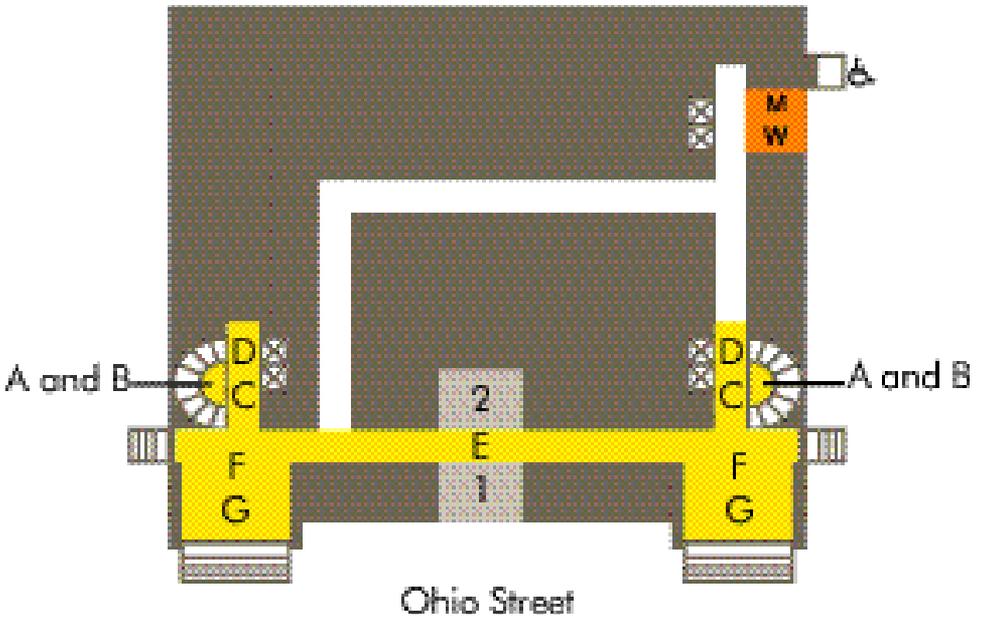


Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library, Neg.- 65873-F

The United States Court House circa 1918.

The First Floor

The bilateral symmetry of the Beaux Arts style is expressed in the public interior spaces, especially throughout the first floor. The entrance vestibules lead to domed octagonal rotundas decorated with richly veined marble walls, cream Tuscan columns, and intricate glass mosaic ceilings. Cast bronze and glass doors lead to the vestibules.



Courtrooms and Offices

1. District Court Clerk's Office
2. Bankruptcy Court Clerk's Office

Visual Highlights

- A. Grand Staircases
- B. Stained Glass Domes
- C. Elevator Lobby
- D. Lobby Mosaic
- E. Main Cross Corridor
- F. Octagonal Rotundas
- G. Octagonal Rotunda Mosaic Detail

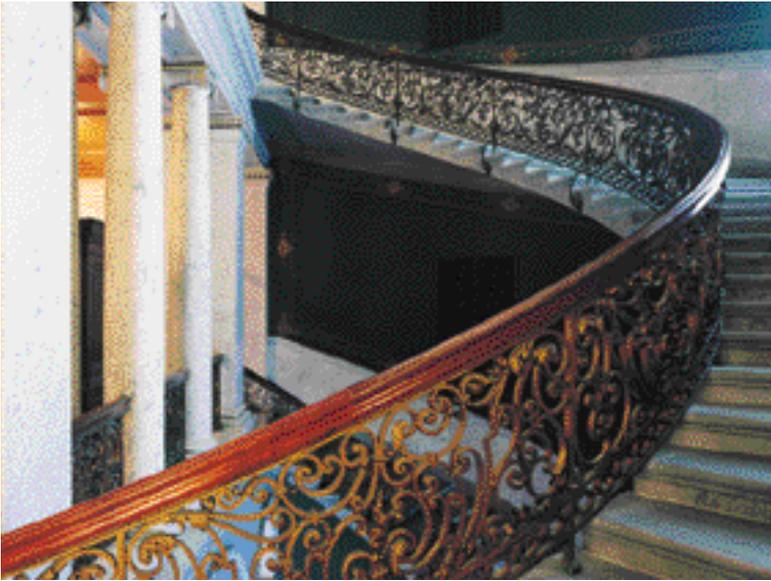


Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

A. Grand Staircases

Two Gray Knoxville marble semi-circular cantilevered staircases, with intricate bronze balustrades, run from the first to the third floors. The stairways feature white Italian marble wainscotting, recently restored handpainted garland borders around the plaster walls, and stained glass windows between the second and third landings. The elevator lobbies or landings onto which the stairways open include English Veined White Italian marble walls, bronze balustrades, Ionic columns on the second floor, and Corinthian columns on the third floor.



Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

B. Stained Glass Domes

The grand staircases soar to highly decorative semicircular domes at the apex of which are fishscale and floral design stained glass skylights. The sections of the domes contain painted cartouche (a shield or emblem) of three classical symbols of the governmental functions historically carried on in the Court House. The center medallion depicts Mercury carrying a postal letter.



Photo: Shawn Spence

C. Elevator Lobby

The vaulted ceilings in the two lobbies and in the two Octagonal Rotundas are decorated with glass mosaics in a Roman style, including several classical symbols representing the powers and functions of the federal government. The bronze gates originally served to close access to the upper floors from the first floor Post Office space which was open on weekends.



Photo: Shawn Spence

D. Lobby Mosaic

Detail of mosaic reclining figure on the east Elevator - Staircase Lobby ceiling. She holds a sailing ship in one hand and in the other the Roman fasces symbolizing strength, unity and the concentrated power of the different classes of society. In the west Lobby, she is depicted holding a caduceus, a symbol of peace, balance and peaceful resolution of conflict, and a railroad engine.



Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

E. Main Cross Corridor

The Main Cross Corridor's original use as the public service hallway for the Post Office can be seen in the restored tellers' cages, writing desks, and representations of Post Office boxes. Today, the offices on either side of the corridor serve the Clerks' offices of the District and Bankruptcy Courts. The vaulted ceilings are decorated with ceramic mosaics in floral designs and borders. In 1963, the floor was replaced with terrazzo flooring in the colors and designs of the original marble (the second floor above retains its original marble floors). Marbles in the corridor include green granite for the base, white Carle Fabrocatti for the wainscot, and yellow Breccia Starsoma for the pilasters (wall columns).



Photo: Shawn Spence

F. Octagonal Rotundas

The two octagonal rotundas on either end of the main cross corridor display some of the most colorful of the twenty-two different marbles from around the world that were used in the Court House. Among them are the green granite bases, the Cipolin Grand Antique columns, and the rich Numidian Cipolin walls. Through the arched doorway you can see the coffered barrel-vaulted ceilings of the entrance vestibules, sculpted from Indiana limestone. Look for the classical symbols and the Roman initials "V. S." (for "United States") in the glass mosaic ceilings.

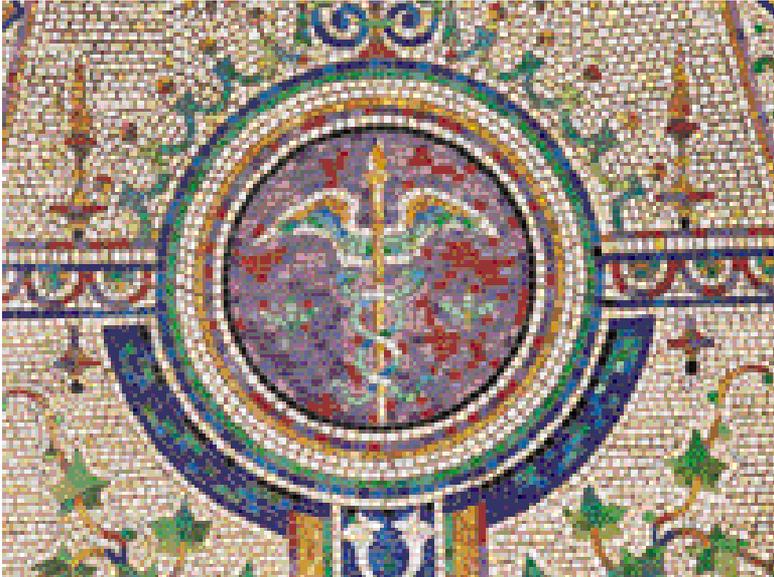


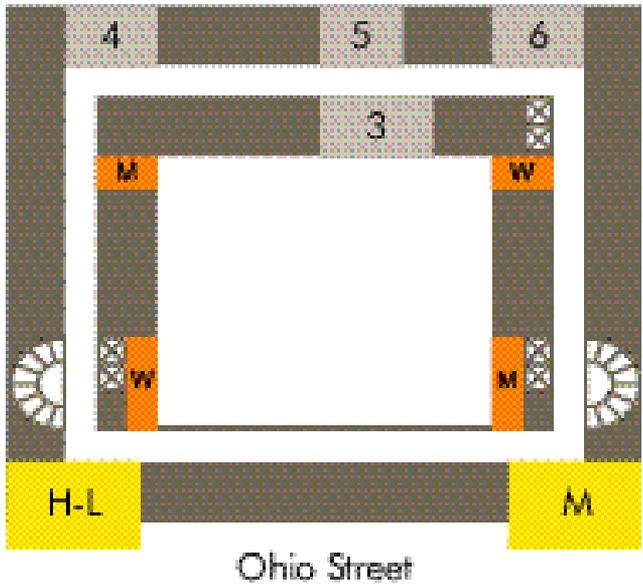
Photo: Shawn Spence

G. Octagonal Rotunda Mosaic Detail

The caduceus, two snakes entwined around a winged staff, was the emblem of Hermes, the herald of the gods, and was the symbol carried by messengers in ancient Greece. From the legend that Hermes threw his staff in the midst of two fighting snakes, that they stopped fighting and entwined themselves around the staff, came the association of the caduceus as a symbol of peace, balance, and peaceful resolution of conflict. Other ancient Greek and Roman symbols are integrated into the mosaics throughout the Court House.

The Second Floor

The second floor originally housed two courtrooms. The West Courtroom was the original district judge's courtroom and the East Courtroom served the traveling Circuit Court. In 1993, the West Courtroom was renamed the "William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom" in memory of Judge Steckler appointed in 1950 and who served as judge until his death in 1995.



Courtrooms and Offices

3. Courtroom, Magistrate Judge Kennard P. Foster
4. Courtroom, Magistrate Judge William T. Lawrence
5. Courtroom, Magistrate Judge V. Sue Shields
6. Courtroom, Magistrate Judge Tim A. Baker

Visual Highlights

- H. The Honorable William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom
- I. "Appeal to Justice" mural
- J. "Industry" mural
- K. "Arts" mural
- L. Courtroom ceiling detail
- M. East courtroom mural



Photo: Shawn Spence

H. The Honorable William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom

The Honorable William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom features two stained glass windows by the New York firm of Heinigke & Bowen. The frieze murals along the top of the side and back walls depict the seals of the original thirteen colonies; the frieze murals across the front (bench) wall depict the seal of Indiana in the center panel, and allegories for industry or mechanics on the right and arts or domestic culture on the left. The painting over the bench is by the Philadelphia artist W. B. Van Ingen and is titled "Appeal to Justice." The original skylight in the center of the ceiling has been closed and replaced with artificial lighting. Hanging on the south wall is Edmund Brucker's portrait of Judge Steckler. The richly colored and molded coffered ceiling is decorated with Greek Key, egg and dart, and oak leaf garland borders, among other design elements. Materials in the courtroom include New Montarenti Siena marble (wainscot), bronze (pilaster bases), and Cipolin Grand Antique and Verdoso marbles (pilaster shafts).



Photo: Shawn Spence

I. "Appeal to Justice" by W.B. Van Ingen



Photo: Shawn Spence

J. "Industry" by Richard B. Hausdorfer



Photo: Shawn Spence

K. "Arts" by Richard B. Hausdorfer



Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

L. Ceiling Detail

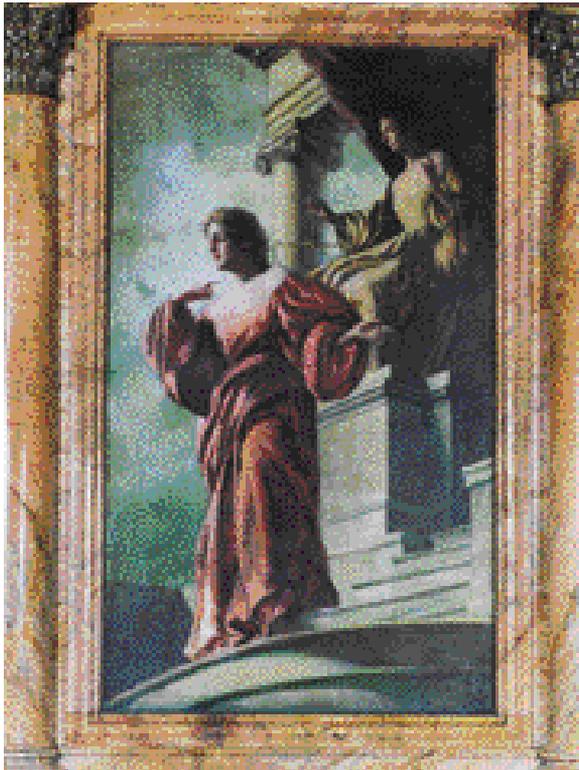


Photo: Shawn Spence

M. East Courtroom Mural

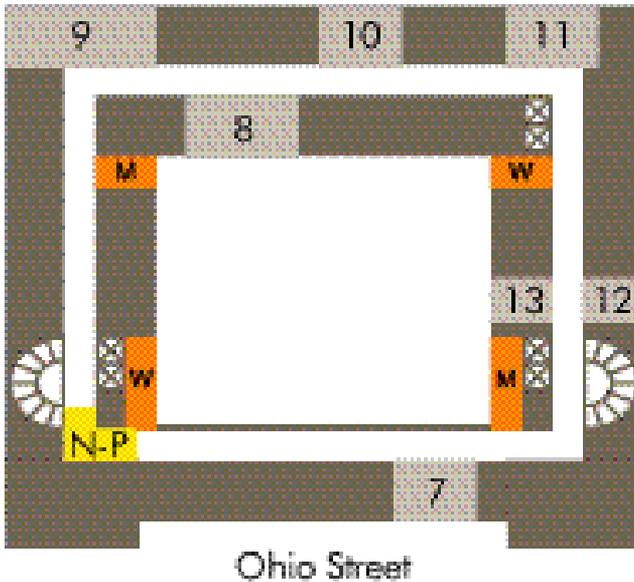
Van Ingen described what he intended to convey in his painting behind the bench in the East Courtroom:

I do not know what to call this painting. The figure in back is a representation of justice who sits waiting to weigh in the balances of each case. The fore figure is appealing to persons not in the picture, telling them that justice is to be done. The judge who sits on that bench is merely a representative of justice and in the painting I tried to portray his position toward justice.

- W.B. Van Ingen

The Third Floor

The architectural character of the building is again articulated throughout the third floor and at the stairs and elevator lobbies. Among the most impressive interior features of the building are the Depression-era murals located at the southwest corner. Working under the Treasury Relief Art Project, which aimed to restore faith in the country through patriotic and historically themed art, master artist Grant Christian painted murals that depict the history of transportation and delivery of mail in Indianapolis.



Courtrooms and Offices

7. Courtroom, District Judge John Daniel Tinder
8. Courtroom, District Judge David F. Hamilton
9. Indianapolis Courtroom, District Judge Richard L. Young
10. Courtroom, Bankruptcy Judge Frank J. Otte
11. Courtroom, Bankruptcy Judge James K. Coachys
12. Courtroom, Bankruptcy Judge Anthony J. Metz, III
13. Indianapolis Courtroom, Bankruptcy Judge Basil H. Lorch, III

Visual Highlights

- N. "Mail, Transportation and Delivery" mural
- O. "Early and Present Day Indianapolis Life" mural
- P. "Culture and Education", "Safety Patrol" and "To Those Who Served" murals



Photo: Shawn Spence

N. "Mail, Transportation and Delivery"

In 1935, Grant Christian, a 24-year old graduate of the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis, won a competition run by the Treasury Relief Art Project, a depression-era project, to produce murals for the federal Court House. The panels on the south wall are titled "Mail, Transportation and Delivery." From left to right, the individual panels are titled "The Capital's First Railroad," "Transportation and Communication," and "Industry and Legislation." The last panel shows Indiana Governor Paul V. McNutt (with document) and Indianapolis Mayor John W. Kern (behind the Governor) who were in office when Mr. Christian painted the mural. At the upper right of this panel, over the sleek modern train is the Indiana State House dome. The center panel shows a city and a rural letter carrier.



Photo: Shawn Spence

O. "Early and Present Day Indianapolis Life"

The murals at the northwest and northeast corners of this lobby are titled "Early and Present Day Indianapolis Life". The northeast murals depict progressive stages in the history of Indianapolis' development from the frontier to the beginnings of urban life. From left to right, the individual panels are titled "Marion County Pioneers," "Clearing and Building," and "Backwoods Indianapolis."



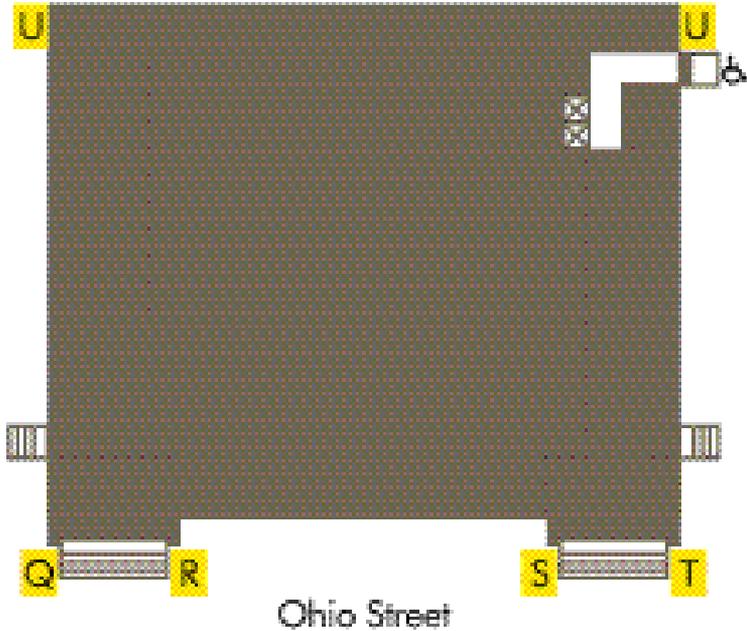
Photo: Shawn Spence

P. "Culture and Education," "Safety Patrol" and "To Those Who Served"

The northeast murals evoke themes from the present-day Indianapolis of the mid-1930s. The panels from left to right are "Culture and Education," "Safety Patrol," and "To Those Who Served." In the left panel can be seen the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Central Branch in the background, which forms the other end of the mall just a few blocks north of the Court House. In the last panel, Mr. Christian has included a grey-uniformed veteran, probably of the Civil War, and the World War Memorial in the background.

The Court House Exterior

The United States Court House was originally U-shaped. The symmetrical facade features evenly spaced Ionic pilasters and terraces with stone balusters. A heavy classical cornice tops the building. A five-story addition, completed in 1938, enclosed the original U-shaped plan, creating an interior courtyard. The addition is compatible with the original building, featuring classical ornamentation mixed with Moderne details such as the stylized relief over the driveway entrances.



Visual Highlights

- Q. Sculptures by John Massey Rhind - "Industry" statue
- R. "Agriculture" statue
- S. "Literature" statue
- T. "Justice" statue
- U. Exterior friezes



Photo: Shawn Spence

Q. Sculptures by John Massey Rhind

The four granite statues at the Ohio Street entrances to the Court House were sculpted by J. Massey Rhind and installed in 1908. They are named "Industry," "Agriculture," "Literature," and "Justice."

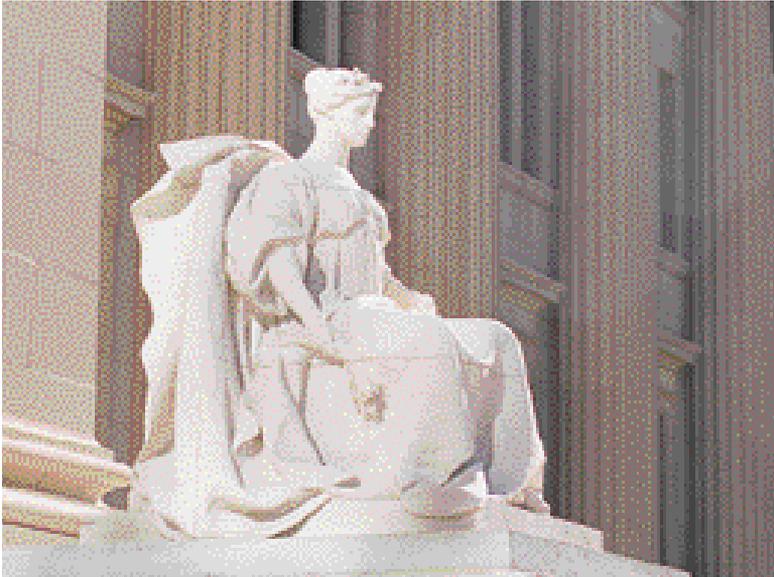


Photo: Shawn Spence

R. *"Agriculture"* (shown above)

S. *"Literature"*

T. *"Justice"*

"Agriculture," along with "Literature," "Justice," and "Industry" was sculpted by John Massey Rhind to depict four foundations of American society. The sculptures are carved in limestone and mounted upon granite plinths. "Agriculture" is personified as a neoclassical, female figure holding wheat and a scythe.

John Massey Rhind (1860-1936), born in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a prolific creator of public monuments, fountains, and architectural sculpture. After studying at the Royal Scottish Academy, he came to America in 1889. He received the gold medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, and numerous commissions for federal and municipal buildings.



Photo: Shawn Spence

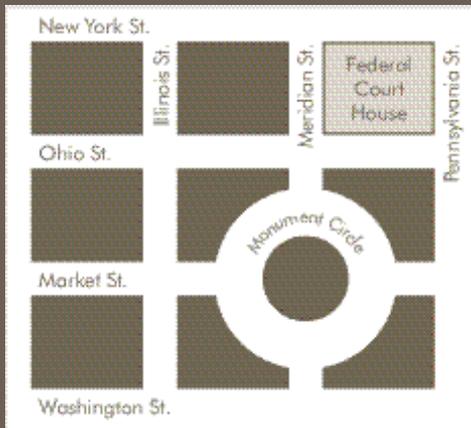
U. Exterior Friezes

In 1939, Herron Art School instructor David K. Rubins carved the limestone spandrels and keystones over the driveway entrance arches on the 1938 North Addition. He carved them in place. Mr. Rubins is also known for creating the statue of Abraham Lincoln as a boy which sits on the Indiana State House lawn and the bronze cherub which graces the old L. S. Ayres & Co. clock at the corner of Meridian and Washington Streets every Christmas.

The United States Court House is owned and managed by the United States General Services Administration. Under GSA's management, the Court House is in the midst of nearly ten million dollars in projects which have upgraded the facility and restored much of its original architectural and decorative character.

The Court House is located in downtown Indianapolis, one block north of Monument Circle in the block bounded by Meridian, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York Streets. Please note that no cameras or recording devices may be brought into the building. Cameras may be checked at the doors. Free guided tours of the Court House are available. Please call, write, or email for an appointment.

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